

**a prayer for which no words exist**

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/29843946) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/29843946>.

**Rating:**

[Mature](#)

**Archive Warning:**

[Graphic Depictions Of Violence](#)

**Category:**

[M/M](#)

**Fandom:**

[Nightwing \(Comics\)](#), [DCU \(Comics\)](#), [Batman \(Comics\)](#), [Red Hood and the Outlaws \(Comics\)](#)

**Relationship:**

[Dick Grayson/Jason Todd](#)

**Character:**

[Dick Grayson](#), [Jason Todd](#), [Damian Wayne](#), [Bruce Wayne](#), [Donna Troy](#)

**Additional Tags:**

[Dick Grayson Has Issues](#), [Post-Spyral \(DCU\)](#), [Mental Health Issues](#), [Hurt Dick Grayson](#), [Hurt/Comfort](#), [Jason Todd Loves Dick Grayson](#), [Dick Grayson is Damian Wayne's Parent](#), [Grief/Mourning](#), [Depression](#), [Dick Grayson Has Panic Attacks](#), [Survivor Guilt](#), [Guilty Dick Grayson](#), [Requited Unrequited Love](#), [Inspired by Richard Siken](#), [Angst with a Happy Ending](#), [Heavy Angst](#), [Introspection](#), [POV Dick Grayson](#), [Dick Grayson-centric](#), [Post-Forever Evil \(Comics\)](#), [First Kiss](#), [Reconciliation](#), [Denial of Feelings](#), [Character Study](#), [Dick Grayson Needs a Hug](#), [Dick Grayson Gets a Hug](#), [Coping](#), [I did not intend to project so hard but i did oops](#), [Unspoken love confessions](#), [No Beta We Die Like Dick's Ability To Communicate](#), [Self-Esteem Issues](#), [Minor self-hatred](#), [Dick Grayson is Not Okay](#), [Dick Grayson is Bad at Feelings](#)

**Language:**

[English](#)

**Series:**

[Part 4 of Birthday Gifts < 3](#)

**Collections:**

[batman fics that i love so much](#)

**Stats:**

Published: 2021-03-13 Words: 5,100 Chapters: 1/1

# a prayer for which no words exist

by [lostandlonelybirds \(RUNNFROMTHEAK\)](#)

## Summary

*“You’re not okay,” Jason says like it’s some revelation, like it’s something new, and he’s hugging Dick like he hasn’t in years. His arms are warm, and he feels like home, and the words are like some kind of internal noose with the desperation with which they want to be spoken. Jason’s hugging him, and Dick’s soaked to the bone crying, and he’s wearing Jason’s jacket and doesn’t know what to say, so he says nothing.*

*(In this part of the story, Neruda wrote, I am the one who dies, the only one, and I will die of love because I love you.)*

## Notes

Enjoy the pretention and unholy number of metaphors <3

Speaking of, I quote Neruda and Siken quite liberally, so you'll see that throughout the fic. The fic title is actually inspired by his poem "You are Jeff" which I put a snippet off below this message. The other poem of his that really had an impact is "Little Beasts" which I recommend reading because they are both lovely.

“You’re trying not to tell him you love him, and you’re trying to choke down the feeling, and you’re trembling, but he reaches over and he touches you, like a prayer for which no words exist, and you feel your heart taking root in your body, like you’ve discovered something you don’t even have a name for.”

— Richard Siken, Crush

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

On nights he can't sleep, he reads.

Dick's always enjoyed books, had grown up with yellowed pages musty with the scent of age as comfort and entertainment, but he'd stopped reading frequently when he'd grown up. With everything else, with responsibility atop responsibility atop responsibility as he'd aged, he hadn't the time or the mental capacity to love reading like he had before. He hadn't been able to focus or concentrate, always oscillating between too keyed up and too exhausted. The words, when he'd try and sift through the neurochemical adrenaline high and sift through the luring temptress of melatonin and sleep deprivation, would float and float and float away like distant birds migrating to a new land.

But now, he can't sleep, and he can't think about himself in any context ever, and he can't tolerate self-evaluation or company. He can't call Donna because of ozone. He can't call Wally because of time. He can't call Roy because of distance. He can't call Damian because of blood and loss and grief. He can't call Jason because—

*Because—*

(Best not to think about that right now.)

He reads all sorts of things on nights like this. He reads poetry in old cafés at four in the morning when everyone he loves is safe in bed and patrol is *over* but his demons refuse to quiet. He reads physics publications sprawled across his bed, highlighter in hand and pen tip in mouth, ink staining his skin as he breathes and highlights and notates and *knows*. He reads philosophy spreads with a flashlight in his empty bathtub where everything is dark and quiet and familiar, where he needs the familiarity in nonsensical words and a plethora of pretentiousness for the sake of it so he knows things don't have to always be life or death for them to matter to someone. He reads chemistry journals at his kitchen counter over cooling cups of coffee, eyes heavy with the weight of existence and comforted by letters and symbols and patterns and laws he's always enjoyed learning.

(He reads psychology texts on nights where his bedsheets are damp with his perspiration and his throat is raw with echoes of past reactions. He reads every last word with a focused reverence, pretends the symptoms and signs don't align with his own mental state. He reads words like *trauma* and *flashback* and *depression* and *loss* and assigns them to people other than himself, characters in books he'd once read and criminals in cases he'd once solved. Because, if he

doesn't assign it to himself, he can ignore it and forget it and suppress and repress and *compress* it until it is meaningless and decayed and irrelevant. He reads and reads and reads, and he knows and knows and *knows*, but he forgets on purpose and signs it away like a house in a will or a divorce on paper. He divorces his thoughts and refuses the symptoms the consummation they desire.)

He didn't read before but now, *now*, he reads.

He reads to pretend he's not DickGraysonRobinNightwingBatmanAgent37. To dissociate thought from memory, consciousness from unconsciousness. To be nothing more than a brain, a mind, a web of millions of connections rapidly firing and absorbing and growing and changing.

Because running is Damian's corpse too far away.

Because fighting is Donna's heart burning in his place.

Because flying is Wally erased from existence and his parents falling and Blüdhaven burning.

Because smoking is missed chances and Jason.

Because sleeping is spiraling and all of the above, and because being Dick Grayson means being someone who's had a funeral and someone who's been the cause of funerals and someone who's attended too many funerals.

(Because pills and hands and thighs and warmth and rain and green and chemicals and death and loss and grief and names and a ticking bomb. Because everything and nothing and all of the above. Because. Just because.)

Somewhere, some arbitrary point in time between his return and now, he'd read an article about universal laws. He'd read about the law of change, about everything and nothing being constant, about things always existing in an eternal state of flux as they become something else and something more and don't *stop* becoming. He'd read about that law and he'd laughed, he'd laughed until he'd cried because he's the persistent evidence of that fallacy.

Because he and Jason had been flux, beautiful becomings and change bright on the horizon, and now they aren't. Now they are stagnancy and almost's. Now they are static and forgotten and memories and could have's and would have's and should have's. He's a morgue for

that maybe, a final resting place of that one precious chance and that one fragile thread stitched between them like an unspoken declaration, a silent intent and promise. His skin bears the scars of his time away, but Jason's eyes no longer trace them, no longer fret over them with bandages and warm caresses and burning undercurrent of *I want your lips more than I've ever wanted anything and I'm terrified you want that too.* With his death, he'd traded flux for stagnancy, and with his return, he'd cut the thread with rusted shears.

The law of change says that things will always change and keep changing, that things are always in the process of becoming something else.

But *nothing* can't become *something*. And they are now nothing, because Dick had died before he could have made Jason love him, and now he no longer has that opportunity. Not anymore. Never again.

(So he reads and pretends. So he weathers the isolation and grief for people once gone and once returned. So he swallows down the bile at every *liarfakedidn'tdie*. So he exists.)

Dick's love for Jason is poetry: a language crafted from Pablo Neruda more than Elizabeth Browning. He loves Jason as some dark things are meant to be loved, born from shadowed secrets and unified souls. His love is a riotous, unruly thing, wildfires and hurricanes over flames and waterfalls.

He doesn't understand the full devastation of it until they part, Jason by distance and Dick by death. His drops of anguish form a stream, smoke finds a home in his choked, lonely heart. He lives through the pain thinking of it as a temporary state, a halfway point to the nourishment of their inevitable reunion. He believes, truly, deeply, with such conviction he likens it to a religion, that he will return, and Jason will forgive him and he'll find love in chapped lips and green eyes. He believes, wholly and unreservedly, that he will return, and their love will bloom from Neruda's never-blooming flowers.

He sees extinguished constellations in Jason's burning emerald eyes, and he sees moonlight live in the linings of Jason's skin, and he sees an alter to some grand thing he's ached for like a lonely lighthouse with no boats to steer home.

He sees their hearts tied by a string, not yet parted by death; blood and fire.

Jason's fist burns like a cross on unholy skin, and his bruises bloom the way flowers never had. A severing force resounding through his soul, as painful as anything else Dick's met in shadows over the years.

(“*You don't do that to your—you don't do that to another Robin!*”)

(So he picks himself up, and he lets himself love a bit less to match Jason's less, and he goes to a café when the world is empty and quiet and no one looks for him, and he reads.)

His grief for Damian is physics: Newtonian quality and Heisenbergian quantity. It equates to the grotesque display made of Damian's death, the unmistakable void he leaves in Dick's heart, the ferocity with which Dick had loved his Robin. His grief fills the void with sharp edges, something for him to choke on. Equal, and opposite, and utterly horrible. Constant in its state, unaltered in isolation.

With a change in circumstance, it becomes uncertain; he measures the ache or he measures the time but even he cannot measure both. It flares at times unknown like the vacuum it had been from the start – a known pain in tears and recklessness and hollowed recollections – and it sparks at times known like a wildfire with varying amounts of oxygen – a pain of variety, a pain that strikes on schedule but strikes without consistency.

Damian's resurrection is the outside force that changes it all, that Newtonian alteration in circumstances, and the sight of him is enough to make something break and break and break in response deep within Dick. Something irreparable and essential and already broken.

Because he's missed him in ways he's never missed anything, he's felt Damian's loss with an obsessive pain. He'd sought out the outline of Damian in his heart and in his memories and let it bleed through his consciousness, let the tears fall as byproducts of that agony.

(“*I've missed you,*” with warm arms, but that warmth can't replace the chill of bloodied skin. The rhythmic pulse can't replace the silence like a scream stuck in Dami's dead chest.)

(So he smiles, and he doesn't show his grief, and he locks himself in his room with curtains shut tight and the lamps on, and he bites on that pen and holds that highlighter, and he reads.)

His friendships are philosophy: ever-changing.

It's evident in Roy and Wally and Kori and Donna and Rachel and so many others. It's evident in every tightened smile, every tense jaw, every hesitant hug, every microscopic indication of growing distance like a chasm between him and his loved ones.

The only inevitability is change, and like with Damian, he can see the past in their present and his past is a painful thing to be confronted with, to face. The past doesn't change, so what he sees doesn't change, so his present doesn't change.

He thinks, therefore he exists, and he feels, so that makes him human, but he doesn't feel like he exists and he doesn't feel like he's human when he's so isolated. Because change isn't always a good thing, and this change is no friendships, and this change isn't changing anytime soon.

*(“You faked your death and let us grieve while you played Bond.”)*

(So he lets the text chains end on their harsher replies, and he lets them think he didn't die so they don't feel guilty in his place, and he pretends like he pretends with everything else because that's what he's always done, and he locks himself in the darkness of his bathroom in an empty tub with a flashlight between his teeth and philosophy publications spread across his lap, and he reads.)

He is chemistry: thermodynamics of entropy instilled in a human vessel.

By the second law, his disorder increases with spontaneous processes, with things like trauma and grief and pain and loss and a world darkened by everything real. Dick's control and balance and practiced

perfections are lost with every weight on his shoulders, with every introductory element for which he has not prepared.

By the third law, only a pure, perfect crystalline in a void of heat and movement is devoid of entropy. Only a Dick Grayson static and fixed, free of (most) trauma and perfect in practice, is well ordered. Is not chaos incarnate, lacking control and organization and stability.

By both laws, he is a mess. He's been a mess for longer than he's been newly not dead, but he's pure entropy mess-wise now.

(“*Don’t make me do this*,” to Bruce, “*Please don’t be dead*,” to Damian, “*Please forgive me*,” to no one and everyone ever.)

(So he sits in silence in his fixed universe of four walls occasionally traded for neon-lit skylines and predictable crimes, and he grieves and he aches and he yearns, and he makes cups of coffee he doesn’t have the presence of mind to remember, and he smooths the chemistry-covered pages with shaking fingers, and he reads.)

Sleepless nights give way to sleepless weeks, a trend of insomnia halted by brief blinks of blackness cushioned by book pages. Words float around rooms, drifting from page to perspective randomly, and there's only so much comfort those words can offer. There's only so much dissociation can offer, only so effective cloaking himself in the words of others can be.

So on weeks he can't sleep, he patrols.

It's an easy pattern, satisfying fight *and* flight. Strike, dodge, kick, flip. Breathe. Beat. Live. Simple things, almost instinctive.

Patrolling has the advantage of wearing out his body in a way reading can't, and when the two are combined, he's exhausted enough to drift away for a few nightmare-free hours. Patrolling, sadly, leads to bruises and bruises lead to bloodshed and bloodshed leads to worry and worry leads to unwanted (or wanted under different circumstances) visitors at inconvenient times.

Because poetry and physics and philosophy and chemistry can't take the place of skin cells, can't replace the bruised epithelial cells and the

ruptured blood vessels leaking all over the rooftop like some ungrateful waste. Books can't offer air when he's knocked flat on his ass and there's a limb on his solar plexus and for a moment, second, beat, he can't breathe the way he couldn't breathe with a bomb on his chest and a hand on his face and a death in his future. He panics, weight on his chest suffocating, and then it's gone and he's still *panicking*, still falling to pieces among starlight from long-dead stars and radiant pollution masquerading as culture and water from a broken sky that might be him and might be the *actual* sky.

Jason's there, in the panic, extinguished constellations gleaming in hard eyes. Pouted lips curved in a frown. And Dick aches, through the panic, through the shadows and soul. Because he loves Jason and he'd never made Jason love him back. Never had the chance to make those eyes light up for him.

(and Dick's still crying, and he thinks about how he's still pouring rainwater like he's a sky ransacked by thunder and lightning, and Jason's still looking down at him like he's some puzzle that he doesn't have all the pieces for. And Dick still loves like poetry, and he thinks of it in Neruda's words as Jason looks down at him with blood in his mouth from someone else's fists and looks lost – *love is a war of lights in the lightening flashes, two bodies blasted in a single burst of honey* – because his love is still a horrible thing, and his sky is still not right for him because he's the wrong titan, and he's still choking on the words.)

Jason's eyes are green, and Dick drowns in them like they're swimming pools and he's not already drowning in everything else. He looks at them – suffocating, drowning – and remembers the pit and that Jason had died like Dick had died and thinks how love is a bit like death too, how it requires some resurrection to save you, how it can end you so easily.

Jason's eyes are green, and lightning flashes, and it's like that time Jason's skin burned his when a jacket covers his shoulders because all Dick wants to say is, *I love you in ways that make no fucking sense*. But he doesn't, choking on it like he had before, and his skin burns like a cross is pressed against it (and he doesn't care). Jason's saying things, words and questions and queries, but all Dick can think is *I couldn't make you love me, but I love you, and I'm wearing your jacket*. None of it makes sense, and all of it makes sense, and some of that must show on his face because Jason rests Dick's hand over his pulse and tells him to breathe.

“Breathe,” gentler than any other word he’s heard from that mouth in what could be months or years and he wouldn’t know the difference. “Breathe,” and he wants to laugh, wants to giggle like a lunatic and fall to pieces in humor because *books can’t help him breathe* and *patrol can’t help him breathe* and doesn’t Jason know those are the only things he knows how to do now? Doesn’t he know that this is poetry in a café at 4am? Doesn’t he know that this isn’t them anymore, even if it had once been? “Breathe,” a third time, and it’s then that Dick feels Jason’s heart.

(And it’s unsteady, a wild thumping thing that Dick’s own matches, and he tells himself it’s adrenaline and he tells himself it’s the pit and he wonders if it’s him, but the fact of a pulse is there is no fact in a pulse, so he breathes and beats and drowns.)

It takes him a minute to steady, and Jason gives him that minute. He’s tousled and wet with his burning eyes and looking far too approachable for Dick’s self-control and mental health. Looking far too concerned and warm and pleasant and a hundred things Dick doesn’t know what to do with, unspoken things from past times, and it’s like looking at a old photo and *remembering* but remembering that you’d forgotten it in the first place. Because he hadn’t remembered the way Jason’s freckles crinkle around his eyes when he’s concerned, and that feels like a crime.

“You’re not okay,” Jason says like it’s some revelation, like it’s something *new*, and he’s hugging Dick like he hasn’t in years. His arms are warm, and he feels like home, and the words are like some kind of internal noose with the desperation with which they want to be spoken. Jason’s hugging him, and Dick’s soaked to the bone crying, and he’s wearing Jason’s jacket and doesn’t know what to say, so he says nothing.

(*In this part of the story, Neruda wrote, I am the one who dies, the only one, and I will die of love because I love you.*)

He avoids Jason after that, to no one’s surprise. He avoids because he thinks Jason could have seen what he didn’t say in what little he *did* say, and he thinks Jason could have seen what Dick’s always felt and what he wants Jason to feel more than anything. He avoids, and it’s not so different than before when Jason had been avoiding him.

A reversal of roles, and because it's Dick it's chemistry: Le Chatelier's principle, a shift of equilibrium to counteract the new constraint.

(Jason had been kind, and so the equilibrium shifts.)

Of course, this time Jason is less eager to let the status quo sit, because he's not Dick and he's not supplicant and he's not burned by skin like crosses. He cares now (well, that's not entirely true because he's *always* cared, and he's *always* *noticed* but now he's been forced to notice and so he's forced to care and it's a twisted thing like relief having someone know and see and having someone drown him and watch him suffocate like Luthor had. Because he's so tired of holding the sky, and smiling is a Sisyphean task when being blank is natural. Blank, after all, leaves room for others to do the hard work, to draw the conclusions and design your role, and all you have to do is pick the script up and dance for them). Jason cares.

(and the way he cares is like the way he sits in a pew every April 27<sup>th</sup> and every August 16<sup>th</sup> praying to some mercurial being he only half-believes in: consistently, persistently, and whole-heartedly. He follows Dick on patrol with bandages and non-lethal bullets, and he makes his way around Dick's apartment with takeout and Clorox wipes, and he bleeds care like Bruce bleeds justice, and it's a huge thing like every *I love you* Dick chokes on, as huge as religion with the way Jason carries it.

It's terrifying.)

Jason cares, and Dick's words and avoidance can't create that distance he needs desperately, suddenly. Because Jason looks at him from Dick's shitty couch with a shitty old blanket on his lap and takeout food spread across the living room table, looks at him with constellations in his eyes and moonlight on his skin, and says *I'm glad you didn't stay dead*. And Dick stutters, Dick protests because he *hadn't* died, and it doesn't count the way it had been done with him (more of a nap really), but Jason's eyes are not-yet extinguished constellations, and his arms are a warm home pulling him in like he's the lighthouse Dick had once been. Jason hugs him, warm and familiar and scented like gunpowder and cigarettes and some spicy cologne, and Dick hugs back.

Jason's care is a type of forgiveness, an unspoken apology for the knock down and dismissal Dick had been greeted with after Spyral, and it suits Dick perfectly. It reminds him a bit of what they'd been before, always in each other's pockets, Jason half-living in Dick's

partment and always at his side on patrols and cases. It helps the sleepless nights a bit, hearing him pop in and out through the window with a broken lock despite the spare key ("Practice!" he'd argued when Dick had pointed it out). It helps to have someone there, to know someone else exists and someone else knows he exists. Even though Donna and Damian visit, Jason alone makes it all quiet. Grief, loneliness, pain. Because he'd never seen Jason's corpse the way he'd carried Donna's and the way he'd cradled Damian's.

His grief for Jason is a faint echo, and it still hurts at times but not in the same way anymore. After a last laugh and temporary cessation of a worthless madman, the grief had died down. Less a vacuum or void and more a silver-scar on a canvas of scarred skin. It had settled, quieted, and Jason's face doesn't bring it back the way Damian's eyes and Donna's pulse do.

(because his grief for Damian and sometimes Donna is physics and Dick is chemistry and his love is poetry and his friendships are philosophy but Jason – *Jason* – is psychology. Jason is hundreds of theories and thousands of puzzles and each only shows one faucet of the truth. Jason is five stages and healing, and he's a conditioned stimulus, and he's a beautiful mess of defense mechanisms and the provocation of defense mechanisms. Jason is trauma and growth and hate and love and he's *everything*.)

So Jason will stare at him with green eyes and pouted lips, and he'll smirk that coiled smirk that makes butterflies flutter like madness in Dick's chest. He'll bandage Dick's ribs when they're badly bruised, the barest scrapes of skin-to-skin contact that thrills and horrifies Dick in turn. He'll pistol-whip whoever points a gun at Dick and make sure it hurts. He'll care and he'll stay and he'll forgive.

And Dick, Dick loves him more than he'd thought himself capable of. Beyond borrowed words like armor over his feelings, beyond flowers and metaphors and parallels and lighthouses and scars and skin and crosses. Dick loves him like Jason cares: a religion, a worship.

He keeps Jason's jacket and wears it at 4am in cafés when Jason *isn't* there and Dick can't sleep. He highlights physics publications and thinks of nuclear green eyes and how they'd look in his bedroom. He reads philosophy, but he reads it with Jason, and they trade barbs about existentialism over breakfast pizza Jason had made. As for chemistry, he writes it in notebooks and thinks of it on patrol and in between bouts of conversation.

Because he still has sleepless nights, and he still reads, and he still patrols, and somehow, someway, Jason fits perfectly in with all that. Jason makes it all make sense in ways that only give him hope.

(Dick thinks, *I love you and it's something grand and consuming like religion, and I wonder if you could love me too.*)

There are moments, fleeting and hazy, where Dick remembers.

(He'd fallen in love with Jason at 2am in a shitty neon-lit bar over cheap whiskey. A fall so quick he hadn't had time to fly, landing in Jason's sparkling eyes as they told jokes that weren't all that funny and shared stories that were. He hadn't been falling in love with Jason over months or years, hadn't been pining away while Jason toured space with two of Dick's exes. One minute, they'd been friends and family and closer than ever before, flushed and buzzed and happy in a way they rarely are. The next, Dick loves Jason the way he'd loved Kori after a press of lips and Barbara after a rescue mission and Roy after a smirk. It had been instantaneous, and dizzying, and exhilarating.)

There are moments where Dick thinks about how it had been before, how they'd been so close to something concrete, to something *real* before Damian died and Dick spiraled and Dick went off to complete another unwanted mission for Bruce and for Jason and for everyone he loves. Dick thinks about the way Jason would lean past platonic zone into the realm of unknown, how he'd let his hands wander wrapping Dick's ribs, and how he'd let them linger for longer than medically necessary. Dick thinks about the fond way Jason would say *Golden Boy* and *Pretty Bird* and even *Dickhead*, and the way he had stared with wonder when Dick did something particularly impressive or when Dick just *cared* about Jason in some visual and definable way.

There are moments, late at night, in the grey hours between days and between realities, where Dick remembers, and Dick thinks he sees what he'd seen before.

(There are moments where *I love you* doesn't feel like the sky, and where he can almost see his own desire reflected in Jason's drowning eyes.)

History repeats itself. It's a line in a poem, a line in *many* poems, and it's true.

History repeats itself, and it repeats itself in tragedy. In this: dark-haired orphan angry at the world until they learn better. But they never really learn better, they learn *different*, because Bruce's anger goes to the crooked and Jason's anger goes to the demented and Dick's anger festers. Because Tim's anger is his depression and Cass's is her voluntary silence.

History repeats itself, and it repeats itself in heartbreak. In this: one kiss salted with tears and one betrayal of some kind that's only half relevant in details (because it is the fact that it's a betrayal that ends things, and the way it hurts matters far less than *that* it hurts). It cycles in relationships, in Kori and Babs and Roy and even Jason, in some ways, but they never sealed a thing with a kiss like you're supposed to.

History repeats itself, and it repeats itself in this: he couldn't get the boy to love him, but he loves him, and he chokes on the words like they're some horrible thing, and he tries to choke down the feelings that accompany the words, and he barely succeeds.

(He can't make Jason Todd love him, but he wears his jacket for the longest time.)

It starts like this, like a poem, like an out-of-body experience: he is in a car with a beautiful boy, and he loves him.

He won't say it but he does. Dick loves him, and it feels like some terrible crime, and he's swallowing the words every time they pool in his mouth and taste of copper. And he's tired, can't forget that, because he has sleepless weeks and he has bruises and he's read more books since he came back than he ever had before that. But he's still in a car, and the car is one of Bruce's, some overpriced model with more speed and style than practicality that hums under their asses. Dick's in

a car with that beautiful boy, and he's trying not to say he loves him but he's trembling, shaking, cause he loves him in that terrifying way Jason cares - like a religion - and he looks in green eyes flecked with blue and wants to drown.

But Jason's hand reaches across the space between them, off the gear and onto Dick's arm, and it settles. Fingers curl around his wrist, and Jason touches him, and he won't say he loves Dick but he does, and it's something spoken without words. It's a religion, heart in his throat, before a mass of mumbled words. And Jason's beautiful, and his smile makes Dick ache when he offers it.

It starts like this: he is in a car with a beautiful boy, and he loves him. And the him's and the he's can be interchanged and mean the same thing, because they both think it and they both touch and they both offer some kind of prayer without words to the religion they make out of love and poetry.

(It ends like this: he is in a room and it's dark and there are no stars here. The moonlight peeks through the curtains, and it shines on Jason's skin like crosses alongside the scars, and Dick wants to kiss him. They are in their living room, and it's 4am, and Dick loves him but won't say, and he should be in some small café across town with his poetry books and heartbreak but he isn't. Jason stares at him and Dick stares back and it feels like their eyes are words at a confession booth because it's so open and painful and there's still that edge of guilt with everything, like this love is something he needs to be forgiven for.

And Dick has a poetry book in hand, but Jason steps close enough to touch and touches, another prayer, and Dick drowns like he always does and feels his love like a sky. Jason doesn't say *I love you*, but Dick sees it choked in his throat, and Dick doesn't say *I love you* but Jason sees it bleeding in his mouth, and one or both of them lean in because they're kissing suddenly, like some kind of miracle, and the poetry book drops and Neruda's never-blooming flowers bloom.

It ends like this: he in a room and it's dark and there are no stars here, but Dick finds constellations in Jason's eyes and the two of them are a *war of lights in the lightening flashes, two bodies blasted in a single burst of honey.*)

Dick thinks, *I love you*, and Jason does too.

## End Notes

if you like this fic and want to support me + my writing feel free to check out my [tumblr](#) <3

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!